

## REMARKS

The present application was filed on December 21, 2001 with claims 1-18. Claims 1-18 are currently pending in the application. Claims 1 and 14 are the independent claims.

In the Office Action, claims 1-4, 8 and 14-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,157,955 (hereinafter "Narad"). In addition, claims 5-7, 9-13, 17 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Narad in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,381,242 (hereinafter "Maher").

The Examiner objects to the Specification because of a typographical error on p. 7. Applicants have corrected this error in an amendment to the Specification.

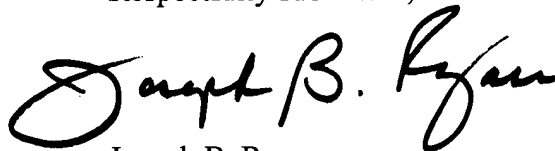
With respect to the §103(a) rejections of claims 1-18, Applicants note that for a valid §103(a) rejection, the reference or reference combination must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (MPEP), Eighth Edition, August 2001, §2143. Applicants respectfully traverse the §103(a) rejections on the basis that neither Narad or the Narad-Maher combination teaches or suggests all the limitations of claims 1-18 as originally filed.

Notwithstanding this traversal, Applicants amend independent claims 1 and 14 without prejudice in order to expedite prosecution. More specifically, the independent claims are both amended to explicitly include the limitation that the non-sequential packet classification process is configurable to cause the processor to skip back to a particular non-initial bit of the given packet at a time during the classification process after which the particular non-initial bit has been processed, such that multiple passes of the classification process can be performed on the given packet. Such an added limitation has support in the Specification as originally filed, e.g., in claim 5 and at p. 8, lines 27-29. Dependent claims 5 and 17 are also amended to be consistent with the changes to claims 1 and 14..

Applicants respectfully submit that Narad and the Narad-Maher combination further fail to teach or suggest the limitations added to the independent claims by the amendments. Therefore, Applicants believe that the §103(a) rejections of claims 1-18 should be withdrawn.

In view of the above, Applicants believe that claims 1-18 are in condition for allowance, and respectfully request the withdrawal of the §103(a) rejections.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph B. Ryan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" and "R".

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